

A LETTER OF

The KING'S Most Excellent Majesty,
TO
The most Reverend FATHER in GOD,

WILLIAM

Lord Arch-Bishop of *Canterbury*.

To which are adjoyned

HIS MAJESTIES
DIRECTIONS
CONCERNING
PREACHERS.



L O N D O N,

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in *Castle-Street*. MDCLXII.

LETTER

OF

The King's Most Excellent Majesty

TO

The most Reverend Bishops in Great Britain

WILLIAM

By Appointment

Secretary of State

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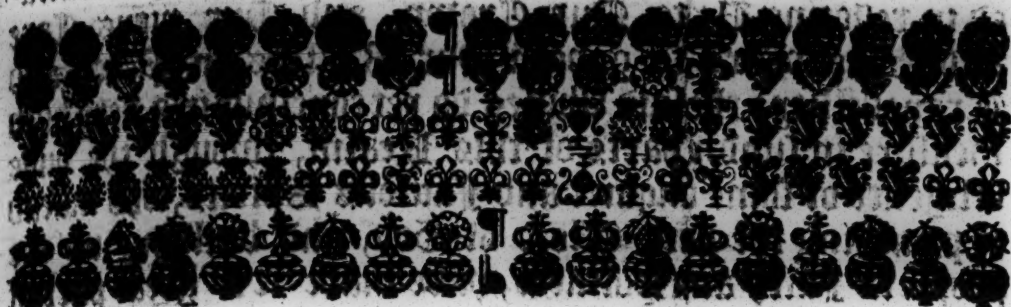
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To the most Reverend Father in God WIL-

LIAM Lord Arch-Bishop of CAN-

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Charles R.



Most Reverend Father in
God, We greet you well.
Whereas the bold Abuses
and Extravagancies of
Preachers in the Pulpit,
have not onely by the ex-
perience of former Ages
been found to tend to the
Dishonour of God, the
Standal of Religion,
and Disturbance of the
Peace both of Church
and State, but have al-
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much increased, to the inflaming, fomenting and height-
ning of the sad Dissensions and Confusions that were a-
mong us. And whereas even at this present (notwithstan-
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ding the merciful Providence of God, so signally manifested in restoring unto Our Crown, and Our pious Care and Endeavour to govern Our Realm in Peace and Tranquillity; the said Abuses do yet continue in a very high measure in sundry parts of this Realm, through the negligence of some inquiet and froward Spirits, who instead of preaching the pure Word of God, and building up the people in Faith and Piety, have made it a great part of their business to beget in the mindes of their hearers an evil opinion of their Governours, by insinuating Fears and Jealousies, to dispose them to discontent, and to season them with such unsound and dangerous Principles as may lead them into Disobedience, Schism and Rebellion. And whereas also sundry Young Divines and Ministers, either out of a Spirit of Contention and Contradiction, or in a vain Ostentation of their Learning, take upon them in their popular Sermons to handle the deep Points of Gods Eternal Councils and Decrees, or to meddle with the Affairs of State and Government, or to wrangle about Forms and Gestures, and other fruitless Disputes and Controversies, serving rather to amuse then profit the hearers, which is done for the most part, and with the greatest confidence, by such persons as least understand them. We out of Our Princely Care and Zeal for the Honour of God, the Advancement of Piety, Peace and true Religion, and for the preventing for the future as much as lieth in Us the many and great Inconveniencies and Disturbances which will unavoidably ensue, if a timely stop be not given to these and the like growing Abuses, Do, according to the Examples of several of Our Predecessors of blessed Memory, by these Our special Letters straightly Charge and Command you to use your utmost Care and Diligence that these Directions, which upon long and serious considerations, We have thought good to give concerning Preachers, and which We have caused to be printed herewith sent unto you, be henceforth duly and strictly observed by all the Bishops within your Province. And to this end, Our Will and Pleasure is, That you forthwith send them Copies of these Directions to be by them speedily communicated to every Parson, Vicar, Curate, Lecturer and Minister in every Cathedral, Collegiate and Parish Church within their several Dioceses: And that you earnestly require them to ploy their utmost endeavour for the due observation of

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same, whereof We shall expect a strict Account both of you, and every one of them: And these Our Letters shall be your sufficient Warrant and Discharge in that behalf.

Given at Our Court at Whitehall the 14 day of October, in the 14 year of Our Reign.

By His MAJESTIES Command

ED. NICHOLAS.

Directions concerning P R E A C H E R S.

I.

That no Preachers in their Sermons presume to meddle with matters of State, to model new Governments, or take upon them to declare, limit or bound out the Power and Authority of Sovereign Princes, or to state and determine the Differences between Princes and the People; But that upon all good occasions they faithfully instruct the people in their bounden duty of Subjection and Obedience to their Governours, Superior and Subordinate of all sorts, and to the established Laws according to the Word of God, and the Doctrine of the Church of England, as it is contained in the Homilies of Obedience, and the Articles of Religion set forth by publick Authority.

II.

That they be admonished not to spend their time and study in the search of abstruse and speculative Notions, especially in and about the deep Points of Election and Reprobation, together with the Incomprehensible manner of the concurrence of Gods Free Grace, and mans Free Will, and such other Controversies as depend thereupon: But however, that they presume not positively and doctrinally to determine any thing concerning the same.

III.

That they forbear in their Sermons ordinarily and casually to enter upon the handling of any other Controversies less moment and difficulty; but whensoever they are occasioned by Invitation from the Text they preach upon, or that in regard of the Auditory they preach unto, it may seem requisite or expedient so to do; That in in such cases they do it with all modesty, gravity and candor, asserting the Doctrine and Discipline of the Church of England, from the rails and objections of such as are Adversaries to either, without bitterness, railing, jeering, or other unnecessary or seemly provocation.

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That for the more edifying of the People in Faith and Godliness (the aforesaid abuses laid aside) all Ministers and Preachers in their severall respective Cures, shall not onely diligently apply themselves to Catechize the younger sort, according as in the Book of Common Prayer is appointed, But also shall in their ordinary Sermons insist chiefly upon Catechetical Doctrines (wherein are contained all the necessities and undoubted verities of Christian Religion) declaring withal unto their Congregations what influences such Doctrines ought to have into their lives and conversations, and stirring them up effectually, as well by their Examples as their Doctrines, to the practice of such Religious and Moral Duties as are the proper results of the said Doctrines, as Self-denial, Contempt of the World, Humility, Patience, Meekness, Temperance, Justice, Mercy, Obedience, and the like; and to a detestation and shunning of sin, especially such sins as are so rife amongst us, and common to the Age we live in; such are those usually stiled the seven deadly ones; in short, all kind of Debauchery, Sensuality, Rebellion, Profaneness, Atheism, and the like. And because these licentious times have corrupted Religion even in the very roots and foundations, That where there is an Afternoons Exercise, it be especially spent either in explaining some part of the Church Catechism, or in Preaching upon some such Text of Scripture as will properly and naturally lead to the handling of something contained in it, or may conduce to the Exposition of the Liturgy, and Prayers of the Church (as occasion shall be offered) the onely cause they grew into contempt amongst the people being this, that they were not understood. That also the Minister, as often as conveniently he can, read the Prayers himself; and when he cannot so do, he procure or provide some fit person in Holy Orders, who may do it with that gravity, distinctness, devotion, and reverence, as becomes so holy an action: And whensoever by reason of his infirmity, or the concurrence of other Offices, the time may seem too short, or he unable to perform the Office of both Prayers and Sermon at length, he rather shorten his Discourse or Sermon, then omit any thing of the Prayers, lest he incur the Penalty of the Act for Uniformity, requiring them to be read according as the Book directs.

And further Our Will and Pleasure is, That all Ministers within their severall Cures, be enjoined publickly to read

read ower unto the people, such Canons as are or shall be in force, at least once, and the Thirtie nine Articles twice every year, to the end they may the better understand, and be more thoroughly acquainted with the Doctrine and Discipline of the Church of England, and not so easily drawn away from it as formerly they have been.

V I.

Since preaching was not anciently the work of every Priest, but was restrained to the choicest persons for gravity, prudence, and learning; the Arch-bishops and Bishops of this Kingdome are to take great care whom they licence to preach, and that all grants and licences of this kind heretofore made by any Chancelloz, Official, Commissary, or other secular person) who are presumed not to be so competent Judges in matters of this nature) be accounted void and null, unless the same shall likewise be allowed by the Arch-bishop, or the Bishop of the Diocess, and that all Licences of Preachers hereafter to be made or granted by any Arch-bishop or Bishop, shall be onely during pleasure, otherwise to be void to all intents and purposes, as if the same had never been made nor granted.

V I I.

Lastly, That for the better observing of the Lords day, too much neglected of late, they shall, as by often and serious admonitions, and sharp reproofs, endeavour to draw off People from such idle, debauched and profane courses as dishonour God, bring a scandal on Religion, and contempt on the Laws and Authority Ecclesiastical and Civil, so shall they very earnestly perswade them to frequent Divine Service on the Lords day, and other Festivals appointed by the Church to be kept solemn: And in case any person shall resort to any Tavern, Alehouses, or use any unlawful sports and exercises on such days, the Minister shall exhort those which are in Authority in their severall Parishes and Congregations, carefully to look after all such Offenders in any kinde whatsoever, together with all those that abet, receive or entertain them, that they may be proceeded against according to the Laws and qualitie of their offences, that all such disorders may for the time to come be prevented.

Given at Our Court at White-hall October the 14th. in the 14th year of Our Reign, 1662.

By His Majesties Command.

Ed. Nicholas.

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